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OFFICE OF PETITIONS

HEAD, JOHNSON & KACHIGIAN
228 W 17TH PLACE
TULSA, OK 74119

In re Patent No. 6,352,107	:	
Issue Date: March 5, 2002	:	
Application No. 09/248,873	:	ON PETITION
Filed: February 11, 1999	:	
Attorney Docket No.: NOR197-00/11233	:	

This is a decision on the petition under 37 CFR 1.378(c), filed August 10, 2012, to accept an unintentionally delayed payment of the second maintenance fee for the above-identified patent.

The petition is DISMISSED.

The patent issued March 5, 2002. The first maintenance fee was timely paid. The second maintenance fee could have been paid during the period from March 5, 2009 through September 5, 2009, or with a surcharge during the period from September 6, 2009 through March 5, 2010. As no payment was timely received, this patent expired at midnight on March 5, 2010.

35 U.S.C. § 41(c)(1) authorizes the Director to accept a delayed maintenance fee payment within twenty-four (24) months after the expiration of the six-month grace period specified in 35 U.S.C. § 41(b) if the delay is shown to have been unintentional, and authorizes the Director to accept a delayed maintenance fee payment at any time if the delay is shown to have been unavoidable. Thus, 35 U.S.C. § 41(c)(1) does not authorize the Director to accept a delayed maintenance fee payment later than twenty-four (24) months after the expiration of the six-month grace period specified in 35 U.S.C. § 41(b) unless the delay is shown to have been unavoidable. Since the instant petition was not filed within twenty-four (24) months after the expiration of the six-month grace period specified in 35 U.S.C. § 41(b), the Director cannot accept a delayed maintenance fee payment for the above-identified patent under 37 CFR 1.378(c).

Since the patent will not be reinstated pursuant to 37 CFR 1.378(c), petitioner is entitled to a refund of the \$4,490 fee submitted with the petition. Any request for refund must include a copy of this decision and be mailed to Mail Stop 16, Director of the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, P. O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 or faxed to the Customer Service Help Desk at (571) 273-6500.

Patentee may wish to pursue reinstatement of the patent under the unavoidable provisions of 37 CFR 1.378(b). A petition to accept the delayed payment of a maintenance fee under 35 USC 41(c) and 37 CFR 1.378(b) must be accompanied by (1) an adequate, showing that the delay was unavoidable, since reasonable care was taken to insure that the maintenance fee would be paid timely and that the petition was filed promptly after the patentee was notified of, or otherwise became aware of, the expiration of the patent, (2) payment of the appropriate maintenance fee, unless previously submitted, and (3) payment of the surcharge set forth in 37 CFR 1.20(i)(1). Further, if a petition for reinstatement of the patent under the unavoidable provisions is filed on behalf of the assignee, the petition must also comply with the provisions of 37 CFR 3.73(b).

Any petition under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.378(b) must be filed within TWO MONTHS of the date of this decision and should be delivered through one of the following mediums:

By mail: Mail Stop PETITIONS
 Commissioner for Patents
 Post Office Box 1450
 Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

By hand: Customer Service Window
 Mail Stop Petitions
 Randolph Building
 401 Dulany Street
 Alexandria, VA 22314

By fax: (571) 273-8300
 ATTN: Office of Petitions

By Internet: EFS-Web¹

Telephone inquiries concerning this matter may be directed to the undersigned at (571) 272-3204.

/SDB/

Sherry D. Brinkley
Petitions Examiner
Office of Petitions

¹ www.uspto.gov/ebc/efs_help.html (for help using EFS-Web call the Patent Electronic Business Center at (866) 217-9197)